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# **“STEADFAST RESOLVE”: EXPLAINING THE KISHIDA ADMINISTRATION’S THREE SECURITY-RELATED DOCUMENTS**

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## **“Steadfast Resolve”**

### **Explaining the Kishida Administration’s Three Security-related Documents**

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#### **Introduction**

On December 16, 2022, the Japanese government made a cabinet decision on the "National Security Strategy (NSS)," "National Defense Strategy (NDS)," and "Defense Buildup Plan (DBP)" (three security-related documents). The second Abe administration (2012-2022) had already made changes in national security. In December 2013, the National Security Council (NSC) was established, and the NSS was drawn up for the first time since WWII. In January 2014, the National Security Secretariat was established to support these entities. Such changes in government security overlap with the confrontation with China in the East China Sea after the so-called Senkaku Islands nationalization by the Japanese government in September 2012, and the response to more than 20 ballistic missile launched by North Korea annually. This security environment has become even more severe over the past 10 years, as symbolized by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February last year. During this period, the prime minister and other relevant ministers of the Japanese government took an interest in changes in the surrounding situation on a daily basis, and frequently convened the NSC to make policy decisions. It can be said that these events led to a change from an era in which only the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) of the Ministry of Defense thought about security to an era in which the entire government thinks about it. The Conclusion of the new NSS states: “At this time of an inflection point in history, Japan is finding itself in the midst of the most severe and complex security environment since the end of WWII. In no way can we be optimistic about what the future of the international community will bring....Even standing at this crossroads between a world of hope and a world of adversity and distrust amidst the most severe and complex post-war security environment, Japan, blessed with a stable democracy, the established rule of law, a mature economy, and a rich culture, will advocate policies grounded in universal values and then lead the way in undertaking efforts to reinforce the international order with steadfast resolve.” The Japanese government’s steadfast resolve is contained in the three above-mentioned security-related documents.

#### **1 Transition of Security Documents in Japan**

The Imperial Army and Navy were dissolved after WWII, but in response to the Cold War between the East and West, the National Police Reserve was established in August 1950, and the Coastal Safety Force in April 1952. In August of the same year, the Safety Security Forces of the National Safety Agency were established, followed by the creation of the Japan Ground, Maritime and Air SDF in July 1954. While the existence of the SDF itself was being debated due to Article 9 of the Constitution ("renunciation of war," "non-holding of war potential," and "denial of the right to belligerence") the "Basic Policy for National Defense" was announced in May 1957, three years after its founding was authorized by the Cabinet. The

purpose of national defense is “to prevent direct and indirect aggression, to repel aggression should it occur, and thereby to protect the independence and peace of our country, which is based on democracy,” a stance that would later lead to an exclusively defensive policy. In 1976, the “National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) (51-Taiko)” was created for the first time, and defense capabilities were developed based on the Concept of Basic Defense Capability. This concept of not creating a power vacuum during the Cold War was carried over to the 1995NDPG (07-Taiko) and the 2008NDPG (16Taiko) after the end of the Cold War (1989). In the 2010NDPG (22-Taiko), a concept change was finally made “to build up a dynamic defense force (not bound by the concept of Basic Defense Capability).” One of the reasons why Japan's defense policy has not been able to respond quickly to the trends of the times is that there was no NSS, and only the SDF of the Ministry of Defense (the agency) was concerned about security. As mentioned earlier, in 2013, the NSS was formulated for the first time, and based on it, the 2013NDPG (25-Taiko) was created based on “the buildup of a dynamic joint defense force.” At the same time, plans have been drawn up every five years since 1976 to achieve the scale of defense buildup set forth in each of the NDPGs, and defense capabilities have been built up. (Until 1985, the medium-term business estimate, which is a plan within the Defense Agency, and thereafter, the medium-term defense program, a government plan)

The 2018 NDPG (30-Taiko) was created in response to the strengthening of the security regime after 2012 and to enable rapid response to changes in the security environment surrounding Japan and globally. Subsequently, as of the end of 2022, three security-related documents were created in less than five years to respond to the rapidly changing security environment and new operational environments (domains).

## **2 New strategy system**

### **(1) Relationship between the three security-related documents**

The NSS is the highest level policy document on national security and is a strategic guideline related to national security, including diplomacy, defense, economic security, technology, cyber, and intelligence, with a time frame of about 10 years. In accordance with the NSS, NDS supersedes the previous NDPG. It defines defense objectives and outlines the approaches and means to achieve them. The DBP was newly created to replace the previous Medium-Term Defense Program. It indicates the level of defense capability that Japan should possess based on the NDS, and presents a medium-to long-term buildup plan to achieve that level.

### **(2) Contents of the NSS**

First, the national interests of Japan, which should serve as the starting point for formulating the NSS are outlined. Basic principles of security are presented. In addition, based on the national interest, the basic principles regarding Japan's security, which have been developed from the post-World-War-II security history and experience and from the choices made by our people, are presented. Furthermore, it presents

the security challenges that currently surround Japan, sets the security goals that Japan should achieve based on these goals, and identifies the ways and means, or strategic approaches, for achieving these goals using Japan's comprehensive national power. It also identifies the various foundations of Japan that are the basis for the implementation of the strategic approach.

### **(3) Contents of the NDS**

First, it organizes changes in the strategic environment and challenges in defense, presents Japan's basic defense policy, and clarifies the approach and means to achieve various goal within the basic policy. After that, the seven important functions and abilities derived from these are shown, along with the basic concept and content. In addition, "The Future Self-Defense Forces," "Protection of Life, Person and Property of Japanese Nationals Utilizing Defense Capability and Measures for Global Security Cooperation," "Defense Production and Technological Base," "Reinforcing the Foundation for Self-Defense Forces (SDF) Personnel, the Core Elements of Defense Capability to Demonstrate their Abilities (reinforcing human resource base, and transformation of medical function)" are outlined.

### **(4) Contents of the DBP**

The major projects that should be developed based on the NDS are: "The capabilities of the SDF," "The architecture of the SDF," "Strengthening of the Japan-U.S. alliance and cooperation with partner states," "Elements that support defense capabilities," "Efforts to protect life, person and property of Japanese nationals utilizing defense capabilities and measures for global security cooperation," "New initiatives for early equipping," "Defense production and technological bases," "Reinforcing the foundation for SDF personnel," "Optimization efforts," "Scale of equipment acquisition" and "Required expenses." The long-term plan defines the structure of the SDF with a 10-year perspective, while the mid-term plan defines the total amount of expenses and the quantity of major equipment over the next five years.

## **3 Japan's steadfast resolve**

From this point on, we will consider how Japan is demonstrating its steadfast resolve by comparing its previous NSS and NDPG, etc., with the new three security-related documents.

### **(1) Recognizing that Japan is no longer a peaceful and safe state**

#### **•Recognition of the current situation**

The NSS states that current international relations, conflicts and cooperation, such as geopolitical competition and responses to global issues, are intricately intertwined, and Japan is facing the most severe and complex security environment in the postwar era. Regarding China, which had previously been described as "a matter of concern for the international community, including Japan," the statement said, "China is trying to challenge the international order by strengthening strategic cooperation with Russia."

### **•Fundamental Principles Concerning Japan's National Security**

In the NSS, the first fundamental principle on security is "the primary responsibility for defending Japan lies with itself, "Japan will squarely face the ever-changing security environment by decisively taking on necessary reforms and reinforcing our national security capabilities and roles. The NSS has clearly demonstrated a willingness to defend Japan's own territory and people.

### **•National Security Objectives of Japan**

The first National Security Objective of the former NSS was to "maintain Japan's peace and security." The new NSS states the first National Security Objective as "protecting its sovereignty and independence." In other words, it has been shown that peace and security should not be maintained, but should be achieved.

### **•NDS (Japan's Basic Defense Policy)**

In response to the NSS, the NDS stated with regard to Japan's basic defense policy that "Japan must fundamentally reinforce its defense capability with a focus on opponents' capabilities and the ways they prosecute warfare." This means that Japan has recognized that threats to the peace and security of Japan already exist and has adopted a threat-opposed type defense as its basic defense policy.

## **(2) Specific policies**

Below are specific policies based on this recognition.

### **•Reinforcing the defense architecture of the whole country**

The former NSS and the 2018NDPG also mentioned "building a comprehensive defense system," but the NDS has more concretely indicated "reinforcing the defense architecture of the whole country." FDO (Flexible Deterrence) and SC (Strategic Communication) are improved and enhanced with a whole-of-government, response to information warfare by a whole-of-government, training and exercises with the police, Japan Coast Guard and the SDF, advanced technology research and development for defense purposes, and integration of national administrative agencies, local governments, public entities, and private enterprises.

### **•Fundamental reinforcement of Japan's defense capabilities**

#### **Defense budget 2% of GDP, transfer of GSDF personnel**

In the 2018 NDPG, the basic concept of strengthening defense capability was to "effectively utilize the budget and personnel," but there was no specific policy such as an increase in the budget. This time, the NSS indicates that "The fundamental reinforcement of defense capabilities will not be achieved by a temporary increase in spending, but rather, the Government will be required to maintain a certain level of expenditure. Japan will take the necessary measures to make the level of its budget for the fundamental reinforcement of defense capabilities reach 2% of the current GDP."

In addition, in the DBP, the amount of money related to the level of defense buildup required for the five years up to fiscal 2027 was specifically set at around ¥43 trillion. This is an increase of about ¥15.5 trillion from the ¥27.47 trillion for the 2019 mid-term defense program. In fact, in the government draft of the

defense budget for FY2023, the new contribution for later years (business budget to be paid after FY2024 among the projects planned in the budget for FY2023) has increased from the usual ¥3 trillion to about ¥7.6 trillion, i.e., by 2.5 times. This shows that the budget for the drastic strengthening of defense capabilities is actually included on a considerable scale.

Regarding personnel, the 2018NDPG also referred to the rapidly declining population and birthrate and the increase in the aging population, and stated that personnel should be allocated flexibly, but no concrete measures were put forth. This time, the NDS clearly indicated that it emphasize unmanned defense capabilities for drastic strengthening of defense abilities, minimizing personnel loss and long-term continuous operation. Regarding the distribution of personnel, the fixed number necessary for strengthening the joint operation system will be transferred from each self-defense force, and specifically, the fixed number of approximately 2,000 standing SDF personnel of the Ground SDF will be transferred to the joint forces and the Maritime and Air SDF.

### **Counterstrike capabilities**

The 2018NDPG also made stand-off defense capability a priority for strengthening defense abilities. It was explained that the target of the stand-off missile firepower at this time would be "ships and landing forces attempting to invade Japan, including islands," and that it would be used to deal with this from outside the threat zone. In the new NSS, the necessity of possessing counterstrike capabilities was stressed, and it was stated that stand-off defense capabilities would be utilized. Counterstrike capabilities is defined that as the "SDF's capabilities that leverage stand-off defense and other capabilities. In cases where an armed attack against Japan has occurred, and as part of that attack ballistic missiles and other means have been used, counterstrike capabilities enable Japan to mount effective counterstrikes against the opponent's territory. Counterstrikes are undertaken as a minimum necessary measure for self-defense and in accordance with the Three New Conditions for Use of Force." It is explained that this is consistent with Japan's basic security principle of an exclusively defense-oriented policy, but it is a major change in security and a manifestation of considerable determination.

### **Active cyber defense**

The previous NSS stipulated that "the nation as a whole will comprehensively promote cross-organizational and cross-sectoral efforts to further strengthen the defense of cyberspace and the ability to respond to cyberattacks" as well. The 2018NDPG, which followed this, however, placed emphasis on strengthening the system and network of the SDF. In addition, as for the enhancement of capabilities in the cyber domain, it was stated that "the ability to prevent the use of cyberspace by the other party will be fundamentally strengthened." But it did not specify what kind of capability this was. The new NSS mentioned the introduction of active cyber defense to prevent damage in the event of a cyber attack. In general, active cyber defense is defined as "constantly monitoring cyberspace, including intrusions into the other party's network, collecting information, and, if an attack or suspicious movement is detected, it will detect the attack on the other party's server and incapacitate the system or counterattack."

In order to achieve active cyber defense, the government is supposed to be given the necessary authority to enable active response to cyber attacks not only on the SDF's systems and networks, but also on those of private companies, domestic telecommunications carriers, critical government entities, infrastructure, etc.

In response to this, the NDS states that cyber personnel will be significantly increased and not only the cyber defense of the SDF, but also the cyber security of the nation as a whole, will be strengthened. It also stated that the SDF will establish a posture to maintain command and control capabilities, the ability to demonstrate force, and an operational base to carry out missions even under cyber-attack conditions by about 10 years, and in addition, strengthen the posture to support cyber-security for entities other than the SDF. The DBP specifically presents various measures, such as increasing the number of cyber-related units by about 4,000 and reorganizing the Ground SDF Communication School into the Ground SDF System Communication and Cyber School to expand the educational infrastructure.

The United States deploys cyber operations experts to allies to conduct “hunt-forward operations” to detect and stop potentially threatening cyber activity. In June 2022, U.S. Cyber Command Commander Paul Nakasone said such operations were also carried out during the Ukraine conflict. The fact that Ukraine's good fight is underpinned by such activities shows that active cyber operations are essential in the current warfare. The three security-related documents this time recognize the importance of cyber warfare, and, on the premise that safe networks no longer exist, it is a manifestation of a strong determination to conduct hunt-forward operations between Japan and the United States.

### **Establishment of a Permanent Joint Headquarters**

While the 2018NDPG stated that joint operations would be considered in the future, the NDS clearly asserts that a permanent Joint Headquarters will be established. The DBP also called for "promptly establishing a permanent joint headquarter in order to build a system capable of seamlessly conducting cross-domain operations at all stages, from normal operations to contingencies, and the ideal structure of each SDF, including joint units will be examined." This has institutionally been the role of the Chief of the Joint Staff as a staff member who closely assists the Minister of Defense regarding operations, and the role of the commander (Joint Forces Commander) who makes it possible for a unit to carry out the orders from the Minister of Defense as well. This system makes it difficult to carry out missions smoothly, and the creation of a permanent Joint Headquarters will quickly remedy this.

### **Sustainability and Resiliency**

The 2018NDPG also indicated the need to secure ammunition and fuel as part of efforts to strengthen sustainability and resilience, but it was not sufficient due to the lack of a specific budget. This time, as mentioned above, securing the budget has become a reality, and the NDS states that, by FY2027, Japan will resolve the situation of shortage of ammunition. Also, Japan will reinforce its production posture for high-priority ammunition and install more ammunition storage facilities. The DBP indicates which ammunition is to be prioritized. In addition, securing the necessary and sufficient amount of fuel was

brought up, and new fuel tanks were to be installed and private sector fuel tanks were to be borrowed. In addition, in order to ensure a system in which all equipment that should be movable can be moved, the shortage of parts will be resolved and the number of movable pieces of equipment will be maximized by 2027. All of these issues have been raised as problems in the past, but as I mentioned earlier, it can be said that budgetary support is a sign of steadfast resolve.

#### **•Reinforcing the defense production and technological bases**

Strengthening of the defense technology base has been mentioned in the past. The 2018NDPG brought up various policies to strengthen the technological base, and, in response to this, the 2019 Mid-term Defense Program covered the strengthening of the technological production bases, as well as improvement of the operation of the Three Principles on the Transfer of Defense Equipment. It cannot be said, however, that this policy is working, as several companies have withdrawn from defense-related activities in recent years. The new NSS seeks to strengthen the defense production and technological base as a defense force itself and mentions the promotion of the transfer of defense equipment. The former NSS did not change the Three Principles on Arms Exports, and included clarification of cases in which transfers were prohibited, limitations and strict examinations in cases where transfers could be permitted, proper management of uses for purposes other than those intended, and transfers to third countries. It was not supposed to promote the transfer of defense equipment. This time, the NDS asserts that, in order to strengthen the defense production base, it will be made more attractive through the introduction of a new profit margin calculation method so that companies can secure appropriate profits and that consideration will be given to the form in which the Japanese government owns its own manufacturing facilities. In addition, the DBP states that efforts will be made to promote the participation of domestic companies in equipment to be procured through foreign military sales (FMS). Furthermore, the government will provide appropriate fiscal measures and financial support for efforts to strengthen the corporate infrastructure. It was also stated that, by encouraging new entrants, efforts will be made to reinforce the supply chain and incorporate advanced commercial technologies.

In order to strengthen the defense technology base, it is extremely important to utilize Japan's technologies regardless of whether they are for defense or non-defense purposes. The NDS specifically states the following: incorporation of non-defense industries, acceptance of R&D risk, early implementation of R&D, promotion of international joint development, active utilization of advanced civilian technologies by start-up companies, domestic research institutes, academic societies, etc., utilization of cross-ministry mechanisms, and establishment of a new research institute in the Acquisition, Technology & Logistic Agency (ATLA) that will identify multi-use advanced technologies and create equipment that will lead to defense innovation. In response to this, the DBP specifically outlines various R&D projects and their implementation schedules, including standoff defense capabilities, hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV) response capability, drone swarm attack response capability, unmanned assets, next-generation fighter



aircraft, and so on.

For promoting the transfer of defense equipment and technology, it was decided that a fund would be created and that the government and private sector would work together to promote the transfer of equipment and technology by providing support to companies as needed.

These are all projects that can only be realized if the government gains the trust of the companies; this time, the budgetary support is clearly shown, indicating the government's steadfast resolve.

On the other hand, in the Ukrainian-Russian War, one of the reasons for Ukraine's good performance is that Western European countries have transported equipment and other aid materials to Ukraine by land. It is difficult for Japan, which is surrounded by water on four sides, to receive such support, and the maintenance and strengthening of defense production and technological bases is now an urgent issue to secure a domestic supply chain in order to strengthen the ability to continue fighting, if necessary. It is also a manifestation of the government's sense of crisis.

## **Conclusion**

So far, I have shown Japan's steadfast resolve contained in the three security-related documents mentioned at the beginning of this paper. Many policies were also included in the former NSS and the 2018NDPG.. Up to now, instead of showing the abilities that should be possessed, they have used ingenious expressions. For example, the target of the stand-off defense capability has been "naval vessels, landing forces, etc. attempting to invade our country, including islands," and cyberspace capabilities have been to "fundamentally strengthen the ability to hinder the other party's use of cyberspace."

It can be said that the three security-related documents this time specifically indicated "counterstrike capabilities" and "active cyber defense" as defense capabilities that should be drastically strengthened from the perspective of Japan's security. In addition, although various measures have been proposed for defense production and a technological base, it seems that the companies that support the defense forces have not been able to trust the government's policies. This time, concrete measures such as a significant increase in the defense budget and the establishment of a fund were included, and a policy of maintaining and strengthening the domestic supply chain was presented with steadfast resolve.

On the other hand, the traditional exclusively defense-oriented policy and the three non-nuclear principles are regarded as basic principles as before. As the security environment surrounding Japan becomes increasingly severe, however, these principles will need to be seriously discussed.

There is no doubt that the Japanese government has made a cabinet decision on the three security-related documents with considerable steadfast resolve. First, with the understanding and cooperation of the people, an environment in which the people can participate voluntarily and proactively in Japan's security policy must be created, and the Ministry of Defense and the SDF, as well as all relevant national organizations have to properly accomplish the indicated projects at the appropriate time with recognition that Japan is no longer a peaceful and safe country.